



St John Lutheran Church

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John 2:1-11

"God's Power and Will to Give"

"And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, 'they have no wine.'" The occasion, of course, was a wedding that Jesus and His disciples... as well as His mother Mary, attended as guests. It took place in the little village of Cana... in the province of Galilee... the hometown, by the way, of Nathaniel, who... when He first met Jesus, wondered if anything good could come out of Nazareth. One of the worst things that could have happened at a wedding feast did in fact happen at this particular one. The host, for whatever reason, ran out of wine!! Mary, as we have already heard, first pointed out the faux pas to Jesus to see what He would do about it. As she did, the other guests must have looked on with great anticipation and expectation... wondering what, if anything, Jesus would do.

Jesus, of course, told the servants to take the six stone waterpots that were there for the Jewish rite of purification... or ceremonial washing, and fill them up with water. Each pot, we are told, would hold about twenty or thirty gallons... and so, with Jesus' instruction, the servants were sent off to draw something like 120 to 180 gallons of water. When the pots were filled they were to bring them to Jesus.

"Draw out some now (Jesus said) and take it to the master of the feast."

When the master tasted the water that was made wine, and didn't know where it came from... he said to the bridegroom, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!"

The prohibitionist and the Christian legalist, of course, wrestle with this whole incident... reasoning in their own hearts that Jesus would never provide wine simply for the enjoyment of those guests present. And yet, God's Word has already declared that wine is among God's many and varied gifts... given to "make glad the heart of man." (Ps. 104:15) And so, He who would give His own blood, "in, with, and under" the fruit of the vine... to gladden our hearts with salvation, here gives the good wine... that the hearts of those gathered to celebrate the joining of a man and woman in the sacred bond of holy marriage might be made glad. Jesus, you see, is not above celebrating the Father's good gifts. His piety, in other words... the manner in which He lives out his belief incorporates celebration, joy and laughter.

This is the first of the signs that Jesus performed during the three years of His Galilean ministry. John reveals to us, in his Gospel... a number of other "signs," or key miracles revealing the deity of Jesus... in other words, revealing Jesus as God in the flesh. I would like to make reference now

to this first "sign" and the last "sign," in order to speak to you today of the Grace of God in His **"Power and Will to Give."**

Let's begin with the last "sign" in John's Gospel. Then we'll get back to this first sign... **where Jesus turned water into wine. In the 11th chapter of his Gospel... John tells us about the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Martha pleaded with Jesus to come to her house because her brother Lazarus was greatly ill. When Jesus arrived at the house... He found that Lazarus had already died... and in fact, He found that he had been dead and in the tomb for four days. Jesus of course knew all of this before any of it happened...but Jesus is still emotionally affected by what He sees before Him.**

John tells us that when Jesus came to the tomb of His friend "He groaned in Himself," and that "He wept." The translation really doesn't do Jesus' reaction justice. You can probably better picture the scene in your minds eye... because you have quite likely been there before. Jesus groaned in pain that He had lost such a close and dear friend. He sobbed, seemingly uncontrollably. His Spirit was crushed by His grief.

And then, all at once, His power to give life and salvation was revealed. At the sound of His voice... even death and the grave had to submit and give up its prey. "Lazarus" (Jesus said) come forth!" "And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. And Jesus said 'Loose him, and let him go.'"

What a phenomenal sign of Jesus' power!! "I am the resurrection and the life (Jesus said). He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."

It is this "One," my friends... whose power reigns over death and the grave... this "One" who forms your faith and life. Death's power to bind you in misery has been trumped... for God's Power is far greater than the fear of life's last gasping breath.

A noble Christian woman, as she lay dying, overheard the doctor whisper, "She's sinking fast." The dying woman smiled and replied, "I'm not sinking; I can't sink through a Rock." Death, Scripture says, "has been swallowed up in victory." Death has been consumed by Jesus... even as He was consumed by it on the cross. Death has met its match in Christ... the Rock upon whom the Church is built.

It is this power of God to give life and salvation of which we are so supremely confident. Seldom do we doubt that God can do what He promises. Our doubt, indeed... that constant sin of which we must continually repent before God... involves not so much our trust in His Power to give... but rather, our trust in His Will to give.

We have, fallen prey to the tempter... who first plagued Adam in the Garden ...with the notion that God could not be trusted with the direction of our lives. And so, we wonder if our needs... our cries and our pleas... are of any consequence or concern to God. We wonder if His all sufficient Power to save extends beyond the great spiritual struggles and battles of life... to the everyday

mundane things that fill our days. **We wonder if** God is as attentive to us in the still hours of the night as **He is when we gather here before His altar.**

In our sin, we come again to the sign of the good wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee... **for He** who spared the good wine to the last... **has spared,** and poured out, for us also the good wine... **that we** might have the forgiveness of our every sin. **As you, my friends,** consume this good wine... **poured out** for you here... **you are** again brought to trust that... **just as** there is no limit to God's Power to give you His salvation... **neither is** there a limit to His will to give.

Here you shall learn again how freely and confidently you may take your petitions to God in prayer... **knowing that** even the little mundane things of your life are important to Him. **"God will cause all things to work together for good to those who love Him and have been called according to His purpose."** **Everything in your life, is significant to God** as He takes you from this vale of tears to the heavenly home that He has already prepared for you.

Consider if you would, what it was that moved Jesus to first reveal His Glory to the world. **Remember, this incident** at the wedding in Cana is the first "**sign**" of Jesus' glory. **So, what was** it that moved Him to first reveal His glory? **Of all things,** it was the danger of embarrassment for the host of a wedding feast, was it not? **Well, it was** that, and, the tempering of the gladdened hearts of the guests!! **You might be** inclined to wonder what possible interest Jesus could have in such seemingly trivial things. **And yet, in** such wonder, you come precisely to the point ...**that our** Lord cares about you and He gives you the high privilege of promising to hear your prayers... **no matter** what your concerns may be.

God's Power and His Will to give. To consider God's Will to give is really to look into the heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. **God Willed that** His Son suffer and die in your place. **He Willed that** you be declared righteous as His Son was declared sin. **Come today, my friends,** and take what God wills to give you. **The good wine** has been poured once again. **The salvation of your** God is now here in the Body and Blood of His Son... **"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall he not with Him also freely give us all things?"** (Rom. 8:32) In the Name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit...Amen

2nd Sunday after the Epiphany, 2007

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